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MINUTES

Grafton Historical Commission
7:00 p.m., March 10, 2016
Grafton Municipal Center, Conference Room B

A regular meeting of the Grafton Historical Commission was held on March 10, 2016.

Chairwoman Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Ruth Anderson, Donna Girouard, David Therrien, Mark Fobert, Ann Morgan, Robert Aberg, John Stephens

1. Old Business

A. Minutes – Ann Morgan moved to accept the minutes of January 14, 2015 as amended. Donna Girouard seconded. Motion carried: aye-6, nay-0. John Stephens joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

B. Bills – no bills.

Ann Morgan moved to take the New Business Main St project (VHB, Inc.) out of order out of consideration for numerous attendees interested in this topic. Donna Girouard seconded the motion, which carried aye-7, nay-0.

2. New Business

A. Main Street Project – VHB, Inc.

John Bechard of VHB, Inc. presented information about street alignment, safety updates, and repaving in South Grafton on Main St. from Sutton to Providence Road. Bicycle-friendly curbs are part of the plan. Due to the changes, VHB wanted to hear concerns about historical inventory in or near the area of work. Some of the known historical items were: Fisherville mill site, Blackstone Canal, and several monuments along Main St.

Ann Morgan stated a concern for the aesthetics of the monuments and flag pole at the west end of Elmwood St.

John Stephens asked how the bike lane would affect the width of the right of way and the availability of parking compared to the current parking spaces. Mr. Bechard said that this question would be answered at the “25% Design” phase, not at the current phase.

Ann Morgan asked if the visual roadway is getting wider, wouldn't that cause traffic speeds to increase? Ms. Morgan further asked if there were any plans to use historic photos to inspire the “village concept”. Mr. Bechard indicated he would refresh his memory by reviewing old photos.

Town Planner Joseph Laydon pointed out the plans for the cannon located at the east end of Elmwood St. Robert Aberg stated a concern for winter road salt harming the cannon since it is closer to the roadway in the new plan. Ann Morgan stated a concern about the World War I monument's integrity during construction and to ensure nothing gets attached to the monument.

Ann Morgan stated a concern for pedestrians crossing from the parking lot to the church across from Elmwood St.

Robert Aberg asked about tree removal. The Town Planner indicated one large tree (34”) is very close to the new road alignment and will need to be taken down.

David Therrien asked about drainage plans. Mr. Bechard said that drainage plans are part of the design process and would be included.

Mark Fobert asked if street lighting was included. Mr. Bechard said lighting is not usually included.

The Town Planner stated that the town is looking at design elements to retain the street's character. Ann Morgan responded that the cannon had to be included in the plan for retaining the street's character.

Robert Aberg asked about how the project will use the historic inventory. Mr. Bechard said that it will, but not yet. Mr. Aberg remarked that the Commission should prioritize Main St. in South Grafton to be added to the town GIS historic layer first, so that the project could potentially make use of it.

Robert Aberg asked what the vision and strategy are for retaining the historic character of the village. Mr. Bechard said that the project is not at that phase yet.

Mark Fobert asked when the next phase would begin. Mr. Bechard said it would begin later this spring, but that he would need to check the exact date in the schedule.

Ann Morgan noted that the canal bridge appears to be faced with original stonework and that the Historical Commission is concerned about preserving its integrity. Mr. Bechard agreed with the concern.

The Town Planner next showed the plan for the Collette Motors area and reduction of curb cuts as an example of an area that could be “pulled together” with the Mill Villages Park and the Fisherville Mill project. Ann Morgan stated a concern for the pedestrian environment. Mr. Bechard indicated that the main factor for pedestrian planning will be that those elements are often paid for by the town and not federal or state highway funding.

Mrs. Kjellberg inquired about changes for Main St. at Providence Road, where the Cumberland Farms business is situated. She stated that drivers coming up Providence Road don’t drive where they are supposed to go, driving over painted areas that should not be driven over.

Phil Gauthier asked if water coming downhill onto Main St. would be addressed. Mr. Bechard said that hydraulics will be considered as part of the “75% Design” phase.

3. Continued Old Business

- C. Stone Arch Bridge project update – Ray Mead stated that he had submitted project cost estimates to the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and that they appeared to like the proposal. The topic will come up as a warrant at the town meeting in May, and is classed as a “major landscaping project”. The proposed project is not going to rebuild the bridge structure. The estimated cost is currently \$221,000 without any bridge structure work. Bridge deck rework is included in the estimate, along with two major tree removals.

David Therrien asked if the project includes stump grinding for removed trees. Mr. Mead said it depends on how the trees need to be removed. Mr. Therrien further inquired about the roadway work and will it use the 1956 roadway bounds.

Robert Aberg asked about using old pictures for guiding restoration work. Ann Morgan said that pictures exist and could be used.

Ann Morgan moved to have the chair send a letter of support to the North Grafton Engine Company 2 Association for the bridge project to be used at the town meeting in May. Donna Girouard seconded, motion carried aye-7, nay-0.

- D. Tercentenary Sign update – Robert Aberg noted that the two remaining tercentenary markers “Thomas Hooker Trail” and “Indian Reservation” had been reinstalled by the Highway Department on March 8.
- E. Ann Morgan noted that Grafton History Day on May 14 would be a good time for a dedication ceremony, coinciding with Grafton Historical Society events on the common. Ms. Morgan indicated that letters of thanks need to be written to Phil

Johnson of the Cemetery Dept, Dave Crouse of the Highway Dept. and the Historic District Commission for consideration and consensus approval for moving the Hassanamesit marker from the Civil War lawn to the common proper. Robert Aberg moved to have the chair write the letters, Ann Morgan seconded. The motion carried, aye-7, nay-0.

4. Continued New Business

- B. 2016 Project Planning - tabled
- C. Correspondence – the CMRPC is seeking networking with other historical commissions in the state. Ann Morgan moved to have the chair fill out the CMRPC survey, Donna Girouard seconded, motion carried aye-7, nay-0.
- D. Request for Comments, if any - none
- E. Other Items – Ruth Anderson indicated she is to resign from the Historical Commission effective in one month.

5. Executive Session

None held.

6. Schedule Next Meeting

Ann Morgan indicated the next meeting would be April 14, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

7. Adjournment

Ann Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting, John Stephens seconded. Motion carried aye-7, nay-0. Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

List of Documents Used: None.

Minutes approved on: April 14, 2016

Submitted by Robert Aberg, Clerk, Grafton Historical Commission

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert Aberg", written over a horizontal line.